

**Political History Collection
Interview H.0000.07 : Tape 7**

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Interviewed by: Melvyn Goldstein and Tashi Tsering
Name: Setrong, Wangye [Tib. gser grong dbang rgyal]
Gender: Male
Age: circa 75
Date of Birth: circa 1920

Abstract

Setrong Wangye was a member of a rich shungyupa (government taxpayer) family [Tib. gshung rgyugs pa] in Tülung (Tib. stod lung) district. His family had large land holdings with its own miser [Tib. mi ser] or bound peasants and also held the position of Gyatso gembo [Tib. rgya mtsho rgan po] for the district. He discusses a lawsuit involving the transportation of government grain. He details his agricultural practices and the division of his lands and implements when he did trial land reforms.

Tape 7

Q: Would you tell me something about the big trouble concerning the Dechen District head? It was between the bound peasants/serfs (Tib. miser) and the new district head. I don't remember the name of the district head at that time.

Q: [Tashi Tsering said:] The district head was the monk official named Chamba Thubten [Tib. byams pa thub bstan], wasn't it?

A: Yes. He was from the Gajang household [Tib. mgar byang]. He died after he was released from Chinese prison.

A: Not only between the district head. There might be some lawsuits with the estate managers of the religious estates and so on. [some back and forth talk about the interview was not translated]

A: There were also a lot of lawsuits between the misers. If I tell you one of the major ones, [it was in this district]. The area of this district was elongated in shape and there were three parts; Tötso [Tib. stod tsho] - the upper part, Bartso [Tib. bar tsho] - the middle part, and the Metso [Tib. smad tsho] - the lower part. Nowadays, they have become three qu [Ch. an administrative unit between a village and a county].

In the lower part, there was an estate called Nangtse [Tib. snang rtse] that belonged to Ditrug Labrang [Tib. sde drug bla brang]. The Gyatso Gembo there was called Tamdrinla [Tib. rta mgrin lags]. His household was called Changgma. Most of the mahjong players in Lhasa knew him. It seems that you didn't know him, right?

Q: I don't know him.

A: In 1918, when the Iron-Tiger Land Enumeration was made, we were the biggest treba in the upper part and our household was the Gyatso Gembo, which was like the head of the Gembos [village headmen] and also the tsodrag [Tib. gtso drag], who were the important families appointed to represent the people.

In the middle part, there was a shungyupa called Wangden Khangsar [Tib. dbang ldan khang gsar] which was the family of the bearded official called Shide Garpöntsang [Tib. bzhi sde gar dpon tshang]. Ditrug Labrang appointed the Gyatso Gembo for the Nangtse Estate and he was called the Nangtse Gyatso. That gyatso was changed many times. It was up to Ditrug Labrang to appoint that Gyatso Gembo.... It had nothing to do with the district and the government. They appointed whoever they wanted to. Just before the peaceful liberation of Tibet, the Gyatso Gembo was Tamdrinla, who used to be the main clerk of Ditrug Labrang.

Normally the three parts sent the horse and pack animal corvée together. In the beginning, it was supposed to be 1,000 pack animals for 6,000 khe of barley. Later, we said that we can't do that and it was reduced to 5,000 khe of barley for 1,000 pack animals.

At that time, there was a large amount of government grain that was transported from Tsang via Chushü [Tib. chu shur] as it was nearer and more convenient. But as for the miser in Chushü, normally the headman of Chushü was regarded as very bullheaded [Tib. g.yag chen]. At that time, the treba in Chushü were hoping and waiting for the local [Tibetan] government's grain loads [Tib. 'bru dod] to come and as soon as the grain loads came, they just ate them. They became so rebellious that when the next grain load would come they ate most of the grain and transported just some portion for the previous grain load. So the grain loads became very beneficial for them.

Therefore, they changed the route, sending the grain loads via Tshurpu [Tib. mtshur phu] to Lhasa. It was called dzongkyel [Tib. rdzong skyel] (transporting from a district to the next district). At that time, the local [Tibetan] government was in a desperate situation because they couldn't just whip the treba so they changed the route and sent the grain through Nyemo [Tib. snye mo] and Tshurpu. When there were about 6,000-5,000 khe of barley, we had to divide it equally among 1,000 pack animals for the three areas [in our district] although there were differences for the tregang.

Normally, we would send the animal corvée from one station to the next [Tib. sa tshigs] or from one district to the next district, but whenever the grain loads would come, we would divide the 1,000 pack animals into three parts and transport them. Each part had to send 333 pack animals. In the Dechen area, some of the grain was transported from Dechen for the Phokhang [Tib. phogs khang] salary office and for the Babshi [Tib. 'bab zhib] office, the office in charge of newly opened fields and taxes levied as a result of the Lungshar's investigation. For this, we didn't have any choice but to divide them to the three parts.

After Tamdrin became the new Gyatso Gembo of Nangtse, he said, "We shouldn't divide the grain loads into three parts. If the grain loads come from the upper part, the upper part should transport it and similarly if the grain loads comes from the middle or lower, they should transport it." At that time, I was at the upper part and at the middle part there was a person called Lhundrubla [Tib. lhun grub lags] who was related to the bearded monk official Garpötsang. He used to drink a lot of chang (beer) and he was kind of disorganized [Tib. za ri be ri].

Therefore, I had to take care of that case and I said, "We can't do that because sometimes several thousands khe of grain would come from Tshurpu. At one time just before liberation, a total about 100,000 khe of grain which was called bumdru [Tib. 'bum 'bru] came. Each time they were sending 10,000 khe of grain which was called the tridru [Tib. khri 'bru.]. It came from Yangpajen [Tib. yangs pa can] to Tülung. In the past, we had been dividing the grain loads evenly when we transported such amounts of grain. We never had any talk of transporting whatever grain comes to one's own area.

Right at that time, the Ritual Office (Tib. Shabten Khang [Tib. zhabs brtan khang]) had about 3,000 khe of grain to be transported from the santsam [Tib. sa mtshams] Estate that belonged to Kündeling. Normally, we would divide that into three parts, but at that time, the lower part just sent 1-2 headmen directly to me and said, "We are not coming up to transport the loads, so you should transport it." Then I said, "If you are going to transport your share of grain loads, you just go ahead and do it. If you don't want to do it, just leave it. We have no choice but to transport the share of the middle and the upper valley because they [the travelers] had the travel document (Tib. lamyig [lam yig]) from the local Tibetan government and the person in charge was very strict." We called the miser and the pack animals and transported 2,000 khe of grain right away. After we transported the grain to the office for performing rituals in Shöl [Tib. zhol] that was located on the top of the main gate of Potala, we said that we will never transport the share of the lower part.

Q: [Tashi Tsering said:] At that time, I saw you coming to Lhasa many times wearing a golden earring. Trekhang Samjo [Tib. bkraś khang bsam mchog] was the official in charge of Rituals office, right?

A: Yes. I told the office that this is the share of two parts [of the district] and that the lower part said that they were not going to transport any of the grain. They scolded Lhundrub [Tib. lhun grub] from the middle part and I very severely said, "Why didn't you tell them to transport it?" Then I told them, "The lower part sent two gembo saying that they are not going to transport it. You better call the gyatso of Nangtse and tell them whatever you have to say. If you are going to scold the people who transported the grain, are you going to let the people who didn't transport the grain go free?" I spoke impertinently [Tib. kha rgyags pa].

Finally, they called Tamdrinla to the Secretariat of the Kashag [Tib. bka' shag 'gag]. At that time, one of the officials in charge was Dongbor Tsendrön Ngawang Rigdrol [Tib. gdong por ngag dbang rig grol]. When I told them about this, he also scolded me quite severely although he had a good relationship with my late elder brother. So I felt strange about that. But he told us to call Tamdrin right away. I told him, "If we call him, he won't come. You better think about how you are going to call him and send somebody else."

After that, Tamdrin was called to the Kashag Secretariat and they asked him, "Why didn't you transport the grain?" He was a person with a mustache and he used to drink a lot of chang. He was scolded so severely that his sweat was almost dripping from his nose. Then Dongbor Tsendrön and Gadrung Dumra [Tib. ldum ra] asked him whether he is going to transport the grain or not.

Dumra used to scold people very severely in the Lhoka dialect. At that point he couldn't say that he will not transport the grain so said, "I will transport it as soon as possible." They told him, "It is not alright to say as soon as possible. You should transport the grain to the top of the gate of the Potala after three days." Actually, he couldn't transport it in three days because it will take two days for him to go back and then measure the grain and divide them among the miser. He, therefore, promised to transport in 5 days and he had to transport accordingly and then he took the measuring bo [container] from the Shabtenkhang and had to transport the grain in 5-6 days.

At that time, we didn't win a victory, but the miser didn't suffer any loss regarding transporting the grain. Usually, the Gyatso Gembo's duty was to tell the miser whatever the person in charge in the local [Tibetan] government like the district head said, and the miser would do whatever they could and we would explain to the person in charge whatever the miser couldn't do. At that time, Tamdrin was very ashamed because he had bragged a lot in the beginning. Usually, he was an imposing person who wore a long

golden earring (Tib. sogji [sog byil]). He was also very good in written Tibetan. After that, all together we [three areas] transported the 100,000 khe of grain that came through Tshurpu and Yangpajen without any trouble.

At that time, my late elder brother was staying at home and it had been several years since I was told to take the responsibility of the Gyatso Gembo. If we had lost the case and had to transport their share of grain, we would have had to do it continuously in the future.

Q: It would be like the proverb, "The evil water spilled on the road" [Tib. chu ngan lam shor], right?

A: Yes. That meant that once water had spilled, the next time it will spill in the same place.

Q: In the beginning, how did he think that he could get away with that?

A: He said that he had an old document which indicated that each part should transport the grain that came through the place where they were living. This document was issued in the Earth-Horse Year. He used to tell me that the document was issued in the same year that I was born. That might be 1918. Actually, the document had been kind of invalid because such a long time had passed.

He also said that the grain loads that came from Nyemo were something new so we should divide it [among the miser] and transport it. He was telling us that we should do it according to that document, but we told them that we couldn't do it according to the document because some 30 years had passed and it was kind of invalid. So we were not going to act in accordance with that, and we also haven't seen it. In case there was a document, the district should have it not the Gyatso of the lower part. If the district had the document and if they told us to do according to the document, we won't have anything to say. He just guessed it would work out according to the document.

Q: Did they actually have a document?

A: Yes. They had the document, but that was kind of invalid [Tib. brtsi med] since 22 years had passed. Since we played mahjong together I told him several times that this document would not be accepted by anybody. I have never heard about this document and you should not do like this. There was a kind of system in the old society that a document for which so many years had passed would not be accepted.

Q: Probably, there were many lawsuits between the estates and lawsuits between the miser? There might have been killings also?

A: There were a lot of lawsuits and there was a lot of fighting about irrigation problems and also about the taxes.

Q: Were there any lawsuits of the miser against the district or the estates or the lords [Tib. dpon po] like a rebellion? I do not mean like a big rebellion, but smaller ones like what happened to the Rong Gabde, right?

A: Yes. Recently in this area there wasn't any event like this. When there was a dispute between the estate and the miser some people mediated and settled it.

Q: Do you have anything to tell us about things that happened in history before you became the Gyatso Gembo?

A: There was an estate called Jagdo [Tib. lcags rdo] that belonged to Kündeling. They had a similar kind of thing happen, but I don't have any details to tell you. I have forgot them. Yes, the lawsuit of Gabde was a serious one.

Q: That happened very late.

Q: You said that you had 8.33 gang. How many khe of seed did you use for one gang?

A: According to the ancient system, we had to keep secret how many khe of seed we used, because the aristocratic and religious estates were saying that the shungyupa had a lot of fields. The shungyupa would tell them that the aristocratic and religious estates had a lot of fields, but they only need to work half the amount of the taxes because one gang was regarded as equal to one dön and they had the land tenure documents [Tib. bka' gtan] [saying that].

We [our family] had quite a large area of fields because the land that used to belong to the extinct households were merged with our land. Before our household got split, we had 13.33 tregang. When we divided the fields, we got two thirds and the other side got one third. Our fields were spread up to Yangpajen, so people coming from the north will face our lands at the first time in Yangpajen. However, we didn't use some of the fields. As for the amount of the khe of land we used, we didn't know the exact number of khe of land. We used to keep the seed in two storage cubicles [Tib. bang ba] in the storehouse, one full of barley and the other full of lentils.

When we planted the fields, they would carry 2 loads of seed behind each pair of plowing animals. Sometimes it would all be used and sometimes there will be a little bit of seed left. Approximately, we used more than 1,000 khe of seed for the land of 8.33 gang. I can't tell you about this in detail.

Q: In 1959, you divided the lands among the miser, right? Did you kind of lease the lands to the miser? In the past, there were 14 treba and each household had 14 khe of land, right? How did you divide it between them?

A: The miser had been working on the fields from their parents' time and they knew how much seed was used for each field. In the past, each of the miser had about 24 khe of land as the basis for working for us as ula [corvée labor] But actually, they had more than that. When we divided the land, outwardly we said that we leased the lands because we were afraid that the local [Tibetan]

government might cause trouble if we said that we liberated it and if they heard about the reforms and dividing the fields. At that time, the local [Tibetan] government was opposing it [the land reforms]. So they could make us suffer because we were their miser. In the year when the Tibet Autonomous Region was set up [1956], the Panchen Lama said he would do a trial reform on one of his estates, but when he went to do that, it didn't work out at all.

Q: You were famous for implementing the reforms, right?

A: Later on I became more and more famous. Otherwise, in the beginning we said that we leased the land and made the documents. We just guessed the amount of the khe for each field that was going to be used. We asked each household how many khe of land they would be able to plant. Probably, there were about 18-19 households. How many households did I tell you last year?

Q: It was like 14 treba and there were several small householders and about 30 nangsen.

A: That's right. I asked the fathers and the mothers [household heads] of the households how many khe of land they would be able to plant. At that time they mentioned the name of fields and they said that they could plant that much. We just guessed and wrote the numbers of khe of land.

At that time there was a custom where three old farmers would go onto the fields and guess how much seed will be used for the field. This was called sōndrokor [Tib. son 'gro skor]. When they did that, the three of them were not allowed to consult with each other. Each of them would pick up pebbles to indicate the number of the khe of land and they would pile up all the pebbles at the front of the local [Tibetan] government official. When the pebbles were divided by three, this would be a very accurate estimation. But we didn't do that. We just asked them what kind of fields you would be able to plant and they told us the names of the fields and said that they want this and that field. After that, we asked them how much seed do you think you would have to use. We just trusted them whatever amount of seed they told us. We didn't tell them any amount of the seeds that will be used. Although my late older brother's handwriting is good, he was not that fast so I wrote the documents. Anyway, the three of us brothers made a very good document for the fields to be ready to show to the local [Tibetan] government in case they would cause some trouble for us.

In the beginning, when we asked them what kind of fields would you be able to plant, they said, "We can plant these [such and such] fields, but what shall we do because we don't have seeds?" My older brother told them, "Don't think about the seeds, we will provide you the seeds as a loan. That is no problem." And we lend them the seeds.

Q: At that time, did they pay you something like wages after you leased the land?

A: Yes, we went through the motions of making the agreement for them to pay us one khe of lease fee for each one khe of land they leased. For the first year they paid that. They continued to pay that because even though they had used some more seed for the land, they had to pay a small amount for the lease fee. At that time, they didn't have any choice but to pay that because we had to pay and work for all the taxes in-kind and in corvée transportation for the local [Tibetan] government. If we missed working for the taxes, then it would involve the local [Tibetan] government. For working at doing the taxes, we just went through the motions of collecting one khe of lease fee from one khe of land. Actually, none of them had actually paid one full khe of lease fee for one khe of land, but we didn't haggle over it very strictly.

Q: In the beginning, when you called the miser and told them that you are going to divide the lands, what did they say?

A: At that time, I told them, "I am going to lease the lands to you." Otherwise, if the local government happened to know that, it would be a disaster.

Q: At that time you acted tactfully to avoid the trouble from the [Tibetan] government, right?

A: Yes. They [our miser] said that they don't have seed for planting, but we told them don't think about the seeds. They also said that they can't plow the fields so then we also told them, "You don't need to think about the plowing." At that time, the miser were thinking about the seed and the planting. So we told them that we will take care of it. They also said that the fertilizer would not be enough and we also told them, "It doesn't matter." We had about 600 sheep, so we had a very big pile of fertilizer and we just gave them the fertilizer.

Q: Did you sell them the plowing dzo [Tib. mdzo]?

A: Yes, we sold them. We had about 25-26 plowing dzo. We sold them for 40-50 khe of barley for each animal. We just made the agreement, but actually they didn't have barley to pay us. In case the local [Tibetan] government would cause trouble, we planned to say that we sold them. At that time, the iron plowshare was very expensive because the iron was imported from India and was brought to sell in Lhasa. We came to know that the iron was used for railways. It looks like the spring of a car. After buying the iron, we had to call the blacksmith and make the plowshare. It was very troublesome.

Q: How long did the miser keep the lands that you leased them? Did they keep it until the revolt?

A: At the end of the autumn of 1956, my elder brother and I joined to work in the new government and became revolutionary cadres. After that, we talked about giving the land during the winter and at that time, we gave them the fields.

Q: This was after the two of you started working, right?

A: Yes. When we came to Lhasa after that, the local [Tibetan] government didn't have much to cause trouble for us. It was also announced in the broadcasts.

Q: Did they keep the lands until the revolt?

A: At that time we told the miser, "In the future, there would be a time when the land would be divided in the land reforms." At that time it was called thugai [Ch. tu gai]. We told them, "Whenever the land reforms would be implemented, you should adhere to the order from the new government. You are not allowed to say that we have already divided the lands." My late brother emphasized this very seriously.

In 1957, it was said that the reforms were postponed for 6 years. It was the time when the Premier Zhou came to India and they made the announcement. At that time, we didn't have any problem because we went through the motions of collecting one khe of lease fee from one khe of land. This also depended on whatever amount they paid us. However, this was enough for paying the taxes and providing the horse and pack animal corvée taxes. All of the taxes were taken care of by our family so the miser didn't have any trouble. So when it was said that the reforms were postponed, we remained calm [Tib. 'jam sang] because we had never missed the taxes in-kind and corvée that was owed to the local [Tibetan] government.

Later, when the revolt took place and was quelled and the reforms were implemented, many government cadres came and asked our miser how we did that. They told them how my late brother and I had already divided the fields to the miser. At that time, the Work Team just left the lands that we had divided as before, saying, "Don't touch those fields."

Q: This was a kind of experiment. When we look at the situation of the miser, were there any differences compared with the past?

A: That was the time when I was in Beijing and Chamba Trinley [Tib. byams pa 'phrin las] of the Mentsikhang [Tib. sman rstis khang], the Tibetan Medical and Astrological Institute, came to Beijing and brought me something from my home. At that time, he told me, "We went to implement the democratic reform in the area where the subjects of your household were living. Those farmers who used to be your trenyog had very good living conditions. All of them had surplus grain and animals for milking. There are 19 households. All of them have become households with good living conditions. At that time also, the previous nangsen had become households. There was also another cadre who used to be a teacher in the middle school. He told me that he went there to implement the reforms. At the time of the democratic reforms, except for 2-3 households, most of them were categorized as middle peasants. So some of them said, "They [Setrong] made us become middle peasants." . Actually, their living condition became better, therefore they became middle peasants.

Q: They were blaming you, right?

A: Yes.

Q: In the years 1957-58 when other miser living around you saw that you had divided the land, didn't they say that they also want the same thing?

A: There was nobody who dared to say that. This was because the law of the local [Tibetan] government was strict. There were estates that belonged to the Lama Gyüpa and Kündeling in that area. Both of them were a kind of model of the anti-revolutionaries. The advisor of the Lama Gyüpa was Lukhangwa and Kündeling had their own dzasa.

Q: Their dzasa was nicknamed, "white bread" (Tib. kogün karpola [Tib. ko kun dkar po lags]), right?

A: Yes. He was the son of our school teacher. In case their miser did something even a little against them, they would be beaten up. The religious estates had the authority to beat their own miser.

Q: That was called the right to punish or exercise legal jurisdiction over one's subjects and was called trimgo rangtsen [Tib. khrim 'go rang btsan], right?

A: Yes. They couldn't even make a move. The aristocratic estates were the same.

Our miser became very happy because they didn't need to work for the taxes. They had a good living condition and had grain surpluses and they didn't need to go out to take loans [whereas] the other miser had to go to take loans everywhere. Actually they had to take too many loans which they were unable to repay. Each of the miser who belonged to Kündeling had about 3-4 outstanding loans; one of these was called the "old deficit pledge" (Tib. nyingche gengya [nying chad gan rgya]). Another one was called the "old interest deficit" (Tib. nyingpe kyeche gengya [Tib. nying pa'i skyed chad gan rgya]), and the other one was called the "new deficit" (Tib. darche [Tib. gsar chad]), this was the deficit of the new loans. Some of the households had debts of about 10,000 khe of barley. Kündeling had made very clear pledges, but actually the households that owed 10,000 khe of loans would just carry a bag of barley on their shoulders and go to repay the loans saying a lot of things regarding the failure of the crops and that their tsamba had run out. So there were many households that owed 10,000 khe in loans. If they whipped the people, then it was regarded that the loans would be nullified. That was called "nullifying by beating" (Tib. nye dag [Tib. nyes dag]). Even nowadays it is similar. When people have a loan of 50-60-70-100,000 yuan, the court don't have anything to do with it if they didn't have the means to repay it.

Q: Tell me something about establishing the County Administration Department [Tib. rdzong rim don gcod khang] in the counties as the preparation for doing land reforms? And what was the relationship between the district and this department?

A: At that time, the real district head was Bumthang Tsendrön [Tib. 'bum thang rtse mgron].

Q: Was he the next district head after Chamba Thubten?

A: Chamba Thubten held the position for only 3 years because we, the treba, won the case. The next district head was Bumthang Tsendrön. At that time, he was the district head and also the Director [Ch. zhu ren] of the department. A Chinese cadre and I were the Vice Directors [Ch. zhu ren, Tib. gzhon pa]. The Director of the main office [Ch. ban gong shi] was Yang Zhuren. Later, he worked in an administrative [Ch. xing zheng] position in the Xianyang Nationality Institute.

Q: So at that time, was Tsendrön Gyentsen Phüntso the district head?

A: Yes. He was the district head and he was also the head of the Administration Department.

Q: Did the Administration Department open their office every day and how did they work?

A: At that time they probably had set up 8 sections [Ch. ke] in the Administration Department and they also had one General Office [Ch. ban gong shi]. The Director of the County Administration Department was Gyentsen Phüntso. The Vice Directors were a Chinese and me. Among the sections were the Civil Administration [Ch. min zheng], Construction [Ch. jian she], and Cultural Education [Ch. wen jiao] sections. Most of the sections had two section leaders [Ch. ke zhang] and some of them just had one. We had only one year to work in the Administration Department. During that time, it was very good because Gyentsen Phüntso was the Senior Director and also the district head. So it was up to him to do whatever he wanted to do.

At that time, the old district head didn't meddle much into the Administration Department, because normally, my brother and I were the main persons dealing with matters regarding the miser and both of us had become cadres. The other gembo [headmen] and some other better people also became cadres. But the Lama Gyüpa and Kündeling didn't send cadres at all. At that time, I advised the household called Nyangtse to join the office. I also advised Shide Jimi [Tib. bzhi sde'i spyi mi], who was the elder brother of the monk official Thubten Rigchog [Tib. thub bstan rigs mchog] and the ex-monk in charge of Shide Monastery. Both of the brothers were born in Mang Gyatso and their mother was from that place. Their father was called Dzondag. At that time he took an estate of Kündeling as a lease. I stayed overnight in his house and I invited him to be a cadre. The two of us talked in detail. He said, "I also think that if I couldn't become a cadre, there won't be a good future for me. But I don't have any choice but to obey Kündeling. They were not agreeing to that." Poor thing! He was telling me his true feelings.

Actually, there wasn't any contradiction between the old district and the County Administration Department because the district head was also the Director of the Administration Department. What we did during the one year [we worked] was that we made a list of all the miser with the loans that they owed or how many loans they had lent to other people. At that time, we knew clearly how many loans they had.

Q: When the Central Committee [Ch. zhong yang] said that the reforms were being postponed for 6 years, what kind of reasons did they tell you for doing that?

A: At that time, a Branch Tibet Work Committee [Ch. fen gong wei] meeting was held in the Changöpa [Tib. bya dngos pa] house. The Director was called Jia Zhuren. I left a copy of our documents [regarding the loans of the miser] in that office and I submitted a copy to the Branch Tibet Work Committee. At that time, we also made a list of how many households were there and how many monks were there. In the beginning, when we made the list, Jia Zhuren was very earnest on that matter saying, "If there would be some violations against the Local [Tibetan] Government and the 17-Point Agreement, that would be terrible." At that time, I asked him how should I make the lists regarding the monasteries? He said, "Leave the monasteries." So I left all of the monasteries.

In the 1st-2nd month of 1957 [note" it was actually November 1956], the Dalai Lama went to India and when he came back, he stayed over night in Tülung Mang [Tib. stod lung rmang]. At that time, all the offices of the local government like the Kashag, Laja, and Tseja came to Mang, and we made the preparation and it was done well. At that time, both the old district and also the County Administration Department were joined together.

At that time, the Tseja Legung [Tib. las khungs] said that they were in charge of performing rituals and they called me and told me, "Bring us a list of how many monks there are in the monasteries. The number should be exactly accurate. You should take the responsibility for doing this work." Then I called the monks in charge of the monasteries and made a list of the monks. We were unable to get a list of the number of monks in the monasteries, but coincidentally, we could get an accurate number of the monks.

After I submitted the list of the monks to the officials, the local [Tibetan] government gave 1 dayan for each monk [as alms]. There were over 10,000 monks and misers in that area and there were over 50,000 khe of land of land. So each person had a average of over 5 khe of land. At present the population has doubled, but the land hasn't doubled, so in some areas the fields have become very scarce and people there were saying that they had on average only 2 khe per person.

Q: When they said that the reforms were postponed for 6 years, what kind of reasons did they mention?

A: It was said that, "The land should be divided when the leaders of the local [Tibetan] government and the Tibetan people would become friendly. Some people were willing to divide the land and some people were not willing to divide the fields. Therefore, the reform would be postponed for 6 years." It was said that Premier Zhou said this. It was said that we should divide the lands when the local [Tibetan] government and the Tibetan people agreed to do that. At that time, Chairman Mao and Premier Zhou wanted to divide the land in Tibet without having any damage [Tib. skyon] for Tibet, even if that meant it had to be postponed for as long as it is necessary. But fortunately, the revolt was launched and the 17-Point Agreement was torn up. When the Seshim [Tib. zas zhim] School, the First Primary School in Lhasa was set up, each student was paid 25 dayan per month.

Q: At that time, it was the silver coin dayan, right?

A: Yes.

Q: When the reforms were postponed, were there any cadres who got angry and showed a long face of dislike because they had been enthusiastic and then the reforms were all of a sudden postponed?

A: Yes. There was a little bit of something like that. People like me disliked the postponement of the reforms. At that time, except for a few aristocrats like Nagbö, the majority of the aristocratic and religious estates were unwilling to divide the land. They were not willing to hand over something that benefitted themselves to other people. All the monasteries were also not willing to do that.

At that time, those who were not willing to divide the lands said that people like us who were willing to divide the lands should be beaten up. Therefore, the United Front Bureau [Ch. tong zhan bu] told me that it would be better to go to Beijing. That's why I was sent to Beijing.

Q: It was kind of to avoid being beaten up, right?

A: Yes. They told me that I will be killed. At that time, I had a good gun that I had bought and I took out my gun and left it on the table in front of me and said, "I am going to kill any person who comes to kill me."

Q: At that time, how many people like you were there who were sent to Beijing? Were there several hundreds?

A: No, there weren't.

Q: At that time, you were called an activist [Tib. hur brtson can], right?

A: Yes. When I arrived at Beijing, the Nationality Committee [Ch. min wei] held a meeting.

Q: I mean how many people were with you?

A: I was told to bring as many people as I could with me. I said that I have three relatives to take with me, but later all of them didn't go. Finally, my brother and I went to Beijing.

Q: Where was your elder brother?

A: He was going for a visiting tour [Tib. Ita skor] in China. At that time, the Branch Tibet Work Committee and the United Front Bureau said, "We will take the full responsibility for the security of your elder brother. You don't need to worry about that at all." They definitely did that and at the time of the revolt, the Tibet Autonomous Region called my elder brother, his wife and three children. I heard that they took a full cart of some valuable things they had in Lhasa. Like this, they were protected by the Tibet Autonomous Region. I was in Beijing at that time.

At that time, at the meeting held by the Nationality Committee [in Beijing], the director of that office explained about the international and domestic situation and then he said that the revolt had taken place in Tibet. This had an advantage and also a disadvantage. The disadvantage was that many real Party members resigned and went home. The advantage was that the cadres who said they are going to work honestly have been kind of selected. And one of them has come to Beijing with his whole family and he has attended this meeting. I heard that he was talking about me. The director was Wang Feng.

Q: Last time, you told me about Tongnying Trüchag, the taxes for the extinct treba that were nullified by taking an oath [Tib. stongs mying bkus chag], and the four types of the exemptions [Tib. chag chen bzhi]. Would you please explain about those things again?

A: Tongnying Trüchag refers to when they made the Iron-Tiger Year land enumeration [Tib. lcags stag zhib gzhang]. At that time they categorized three kind of extinct trebas (taxpayers); the earlier extinct ones [Tib. snga stongs], the middle extinct ones [Tib. bar stongs], and the newly extinct ones [Tib. phyi stongs]. This was done in accordance with the traces of the lands that were still there. They made them cultivate the middle and newly extinct lands and made them get restored [Tib. bsilangs]. As for the old extinct treba, many people swore by washing a statue and drinking the water used for washing the statue and the taxes were completely exempted. This was a kind of religious activity.

Q: Was this swearing done by the owner of the land or what?

A: Yes, the owner of the land did that.

Q: What were the four types of exemptions?

A: The four types of exemptions were: 1. The Tongnying Truchag; 2. Gyajong Magchag [Tib. rgya sbyong dmag chag] (the tax exemption for the Chinese Trained Regiment [Trapchi Regiment]); 3. The Shabdö Ngochag [tib zhabs sdod ngo chag] (the tax exemption for providing a government official); 4. the Iron-Hare enumeration note [Tib. lcags yos zhib mchan].

The Iron-Tiger Land Enumeration was made in 1930. From 1930-31, the government reinvestigated it thoroughly and made the correction notes in the Iron-Hare Year.